

# SIMPLE STEPS TO A POWERFUL PRESENTATION



***"According to most studies, peoples' number one fear is public speaking. Number two fear is death. Death is number two! That means at most funerals the person delivering the eulogy would rather be in the casket."***

***Jerry Seinfeld***

## GET STARTED BY PREPARING

***Public speaking is a skill that must be honed. Winging it doesn't work unless you're a natural born talent. . . and there are very few of those.***

### **1. Know Your Audience**

*Find out who your audience is going to be ahead of time.*

- Who are they? Age, Profession, Attitude, Personalities, Interests
- What do they know about the subject?
- What do they want to hear?

### **2. Know Your Subject**

*If you're not already an authority in your subject, become one.*

- Check out any recent trends, future projections (to be current).
- Check out recent controversies (to be prepared for Q&A).

### **3. Define Your Objective**

*Know where you're going before you start.*

- What are you trying to communicate?
- What is your purpose? To inform? Persuade? Problem-Solve?
- Look at speech from the audience's point of view. What's in it for them?

***Okay. . .now you're ready to write.***

## **PUT IT DOWN ON PAPER**

***“A short speech is good... a shorter one is better.”***

### **1. Main Message**

*Think about what you really want the audience to walk away with.*

- Put this in 25 words or less.
- Use plain words the audience can understand.
- Keep the message direct and simple.

### **2. Brainstorm for Bright Ideas**

*Let your imagination go. You can edit later.*

- List the points you want to cover. Fill one page.
- Review ideas, prioritize and get rid of what doesn't work.
- Tell your audience only what they need to know.

### **3. List 3 Points (and only 3 points)**

*People process information in 3's.*

For each point use:

- Headline
- Facts, statistics, studies (backs up your point)
- Anecdotes, examples, personal stories (helps audience visualize your point)

### **4. Write the Ending First**

*Know where you want to end up, or you won't know how to get there.*

- Give a 30 second summary, hitting your 3 key points and conclusion.
- Draw attention to the end, "In closing," or "Let me sum up by saying,".
- Craft compelling closes: a call to action, future prediction, a challenge.

### **5. Go for the "Grabber" Opening**

*First impressions are crucial to your success.*

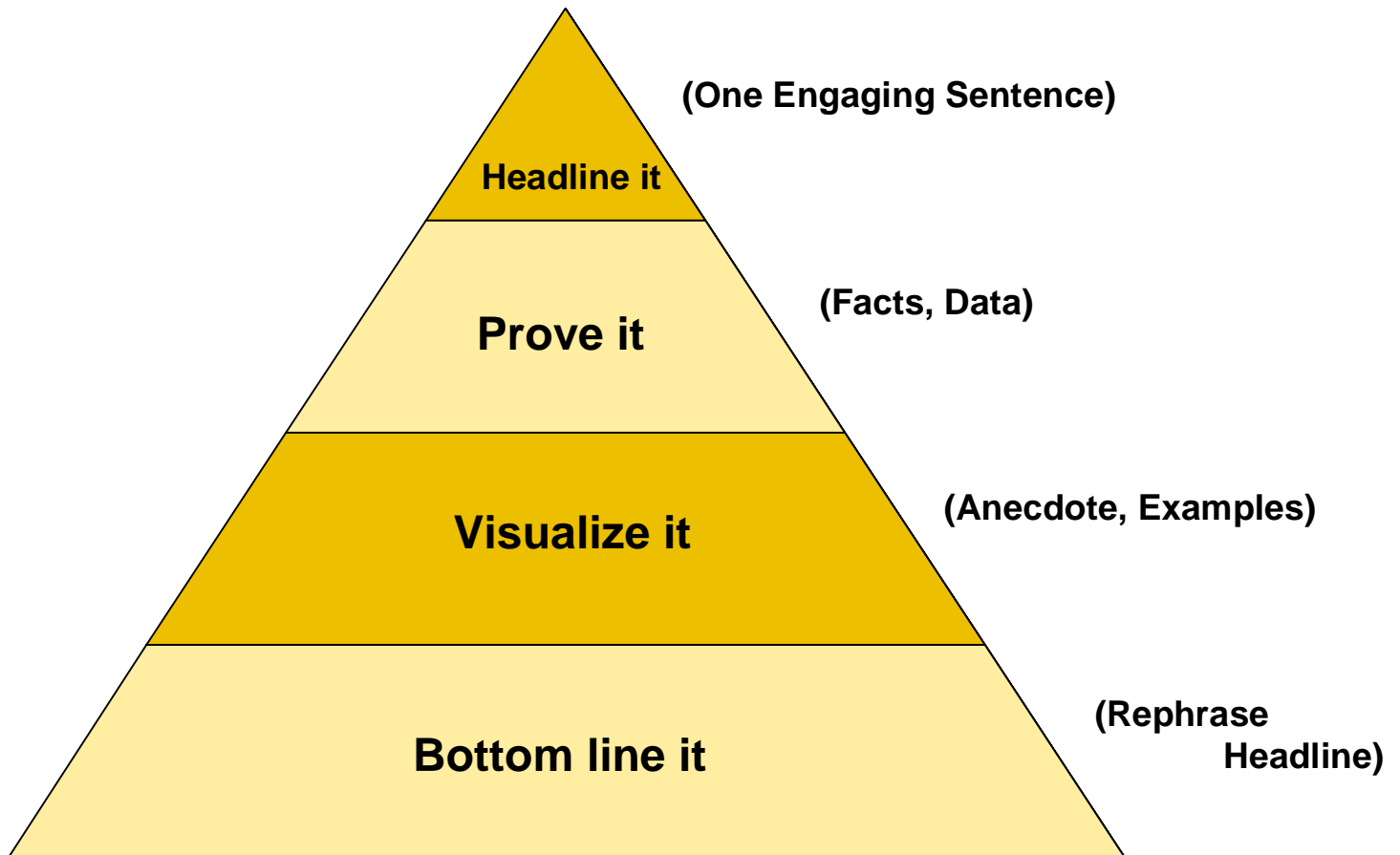
- Deliver a new, dramatic, startling fact to give importance to your message.
- Use a prop to dramatize your message.
- Start with a human interest story, anecdote, joke (if you're funny and it's relevant).

### **6. Write Out the Entire Speech and Focus Audience on Key Points**

*Remember the goal is to **communicate** your message.*

- Write the way you talk.
- Write in the present tense. Use short sentences and dynamic language.
- Use phrases to draw attention: "Most importantly", "Let's make this clear".

# THE MESSAGE PYRAMID



## **QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD**

### **Practice Q&A**

*Let your natural ease and personality come through here.*

- ☐ Try to anticipate what questions might be asked.
- ☐ Practice in front of mirror with a tape recorder/video camera/coach.
- ☐ Practice bridges to go from a negative question to your positive answer.

### **Put Q&A Segment within Your Presentation**

*This lets you keep control and end with YOUR final take-home message.*

- ☐ 3/4ths of the way through the speech open it up for questions.
- ☐ If no one asks a question, start it off with, "One thing I'm often asked is. . ."
- ☐ Start answer with questioner, move to audience, end with questioner.

### **Keep Q&A Segment to 10-20 Minutes**

*This is enough time to share important information and keep it moving.*

- ☐ Repeat positive questions.
- ☐ Paraphrase negative questions in a positive way.
- ☐ End on a positive question.

### **Keep Your Cool with Difficult Questions**

*This is what separates the amateurs from the pros.*

## **VISUAL AIDS**

***Help the audience understand the visual and they will better understand you.***

### **Need For Visuals**

*A visual helps you save a thousand words.*

- 85% of information stored in the brain is received visually.
- People retain information better if it's seen as well as heard.
- Visuals (used correctly) make a presentation more convincing.

### **Rules**

- Only use visuals if they emphasize/clarify your message.
- Use visuals as an aid, not a crutch.
- Practice your presentation with the visuals.

### **Creating Effective Visuals**

*Keep it visually stimulating so your audience will remember it.*

### **KISS Your Visuals**

*Keep it short and simple.*

- Use simple pictures and graphs.
- Use one major idea per visual.
- Use more than one color, but not so many to make it distracting.

### **Bullet Point Your Visuals**

- Use ♦ or ✓ for emphasis.
- 3X4 rule: Three bullets max per visual. Four words max to a bullet.
- Use simple, bold type.

### **Computer Slides**

- Use consistent colors, background, and fonts.
- Use pictures instead of words whenever possible.
- Go for the graphic impact. Use bold fonts and graphs.

### **Flip Charts**

*Good for small, informal meetings to create graphics as you talk.*

- Use block letters 2 inches high.
- Use dark and heavy ink.
- Tab sheets to help flip pages.
- Stagger tabs to find your place.

### **Charts and Graphs**

- Keep them simple. Show only necessary numbers.
- Label the horizontal and vertical axes and trend lines.
- Make sure labels are legible.

## **PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT**

### **1. Practice Speech Aloud at Least 3 Times**

*This teaches you syntax and grammar.*

- ☐ Talk slowly with conviction and expression.
- ☐ Change phrases so they sound like you talk.
- ☐ Speak louder/softer/pause/ change inflection.

### **2. Mark Words for Emphasis**

*This reminds you to speak with conviction and vocal diversity.*

- ☐ Use / for a brief pause, X for a full stop after a sentence.
- ☐ Make marginal notes: "slow down", "speed up", "smile", "gesture".
- ☐ Practice changing emphasis.

### **3. Practice in Front of a Mirror**

*Imagine the audience is watching you.*

- ☐ Note your facial expressions and hand gestures.
- ☐ Use a tape recorder to check how you sound.
- ☐ Use a video recorder, if possible.

### **4. Bullet Point Your Speech**

*This is just to jog your memory.*

- ☐ Put your speech into key bullet points on 3X5 cards.
- ☐ Write out any direct quotes. (You can read them from the cards.)
- ☐ Repeat step 2.

### **5. Practice with Your Visuals**

*Remember you control the visuals, they do not control you.*

- ☐ Do a complete run-through of the speech with your visuals.
- ☐ Get rid of any visuals that don't add to the presentation.
- ☐ Use your visuals as aids to make your points, not as a crutch.

## PROJECTING A POWERFUL AND POSITIVE POINT OF VIEW

### GIVING THE SPEECH:

#### 1. Turn Stage Fright into Stage Energy

*A little stage fright is okay. It can energize you/help you communicate.*

- Do warm-up exercises, walk around, shake off excess fright.
- Psyche up for a peak performance. (You're a 1000 watt bulb!)
- Envision yourself giving a dynamite speech.

#### 2. Make a Dynamite First Impression

*Show that you're happy to be here, communicating to the audience.*

- Start with a smile on your face. Excitement & boredom are contagious.
- Carry yourself with energy, authority. Communication is 93% non-verbal.
- Be warm. Be welcoming. Be exciting.

#### 3. Take Control of the Stage

*Give the audience a minute to focus on you.*

- Take a two second pause to get the audience's attention.
- Look them in the eyes to establish rapport. Create one-to-one intimacy.
- Give them the bottom line. (Tell them what you're going to tell them.)

#### 4. Play off Your Audience

*Your goal is 90% eye contact during the speech to create a bond.*

- Maintain total eye contact for the first and last minute.
- Criss-cross the audience: left, center, right, focusing on faces.
- Finish a point with one person before going onto the next.

#### 5. Don't Read Your Speech

*You're more convincing, compelling and interesting when you don't read.*

- Use note cards with bullet points instead of a script.
- Keep it conversational. Don't preach, lecture or kowtow.
- If you must read, see next page.

#### 6. Use Hand Gestures

*They emphasize points, add vocal diversity and shake off nervous energy.*

- Start with hands at waist level, hold apart. Let natural gestures come.
- Don't grip or lean on lectern.
- Don't put hands in pockets, behind back or folded in front.



## **POSITIONING YOURSELF**

*Moving and handling the equipment with ease makes your message more credible.*

- Face the audience with the screen on your left (so audience looks at you first).
- Check that the first visual is positioned as you would read it.
- Turn on the projector and step back to the screen to take the stage.
- Stand with your feet square to the audience.
- Use your left hand to point to the screen.
- Don't move your feet or you might end up with your back to the audience.
- Stay near the screen when you talk about the visual, so you don't divide audience attention from the focal point.
- Use full room lighting. You should always be clearly seen.

## **TALKING IT THROUGH**

*Walk through each visual so the audience can process it with you.*

*This is the first time they've seen it.*

- Pause. It gives you time to think and makes you look authoritative and poised.
- Headline the message in each slide to focus your audience on its meaning.
- Bullet points:
  - Read off the words and phrases from top to bottom.
  - Return to the first point and explain its meaning.
  - Elaborate, now that they've seen the rest of the visual.
- Line Chart:
  - Identify the horizontal and vertical axes and trend lines.
  - Explain any variables.
  - Explain what's important and why.

## **THE FINAL WORD**

- Keep it simple.
- Keep it conversational.
- Keep it moving.

## **MISCELLANEOUS (BUT IMPORTANT) POINTS**

### **If You MUST Read Your Speech**

*This is only a last resort.*

- Type phrases, not sentences. Use only 2/3rds of the page for an easier read.
- Divide each sentence into separate thoughts, phrases.
- Mark up your speech for emphasis. Make notes in margin.

### **Keep Clothes Classy & Conservative**

#### **Men:**

- Wear a navy or dark gray suit, solid or small pinstripe.
- Wear a white shirt. It's crisper and more professional looking.
- Wear a classy tie. Dark red/maroon shows up best, no distracting patterns.

#### **Women:**

- Wear a tailored suit/dress. Bright colors work well.
- Long sleeves on a dress or blouse are more professional looking.
- Watch out for distracting patterns in your clothes and big jewelry.

### **Before the Presentation**

#### **Check Out the Room**

*Do an on-site inspection.*

- Is there a lectern?
- Where are the electrical outlets?
- What are the seating arrangements?

#### **Check Out the Equipment**

*Make sure it works.*

- If you're using a computer or projector make sure they work. Have extra bulbs, etc.
- With a big crowd use a microphone (wireless is best for movement). Have a back-up.
- If you need an easel or flip chart, check for fresh pens, pointer, etc.

#### **Check Out Yourself**

*Look your best.*

- Do you need a haircut?
- Just before the speech, do a last minute mirror check.
- Have room temperature (not cold) water available.